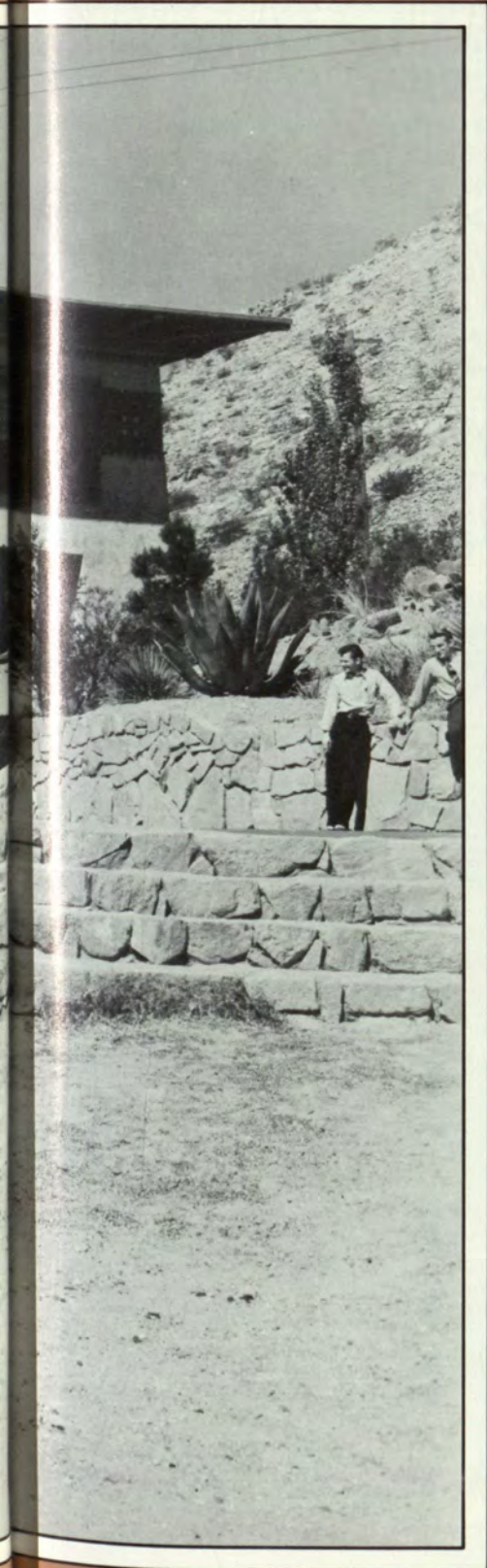


## CHAPTER 3

# 1931-1948



The College of Mines entered a new era in its history on September 1, 1931, when John Gerald Barry became the institution's first president. He was a mining engineering graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and had taught both there and at the University of Nebraska, and had professional experience at mines in the United States and Mexico.

Unemployment, bank failures, collapsing prices for agricultural products, and other problems of the Depression era were making inroads. The college was feeling the bite as well and was struggling to pay its bills. Students were able to find humor in adversity with such observations as: "An optimist is a college graduate who thinks he's going to get a job."

As a result of a Board of Regents action in July, a standing committee was named to keep an eye on the College of Mines. Robert L. Holliday, El Paso attorney and board member from 1927 to 1933, headed that committee. A local committee was organized to raise money for the college which was having trouble meeting its payroll. The El Paso School Board, which had helped in the merger of the junior college with the College of Mines, agreed to further help: it would provide \$25,000 per year for two years toward faculty salaries and would also make library and other facilities available. The college thus was able to proceed with teacher training courses and the new Bachelor of Arts degree authorized by the regents.

Serving with President Barry in the administration were John W. "Cap" Kidd, dean of mining and engineering, whose departments included mining and metallurgy, geology, mathematics and physics, and chemistry; and C. A. Puckett, dean of arts and education, over the Academic Department which offered majors in chemistry, economics and business administration, education, English, geology, history, mathematics, language (French, German, Spanish), and physics. The students in the two divisions called themselves the Engineers and the Academics, a distinction that carried over into campus politics for many years.



In the 1932 yearbook the Engineers listed as their traditions the initiation of their freshmen at a St. Pat's picnic on March 17, the annual Hard Luck Dance given by the Scientific Club whose membership was open only to Engineering upperclassmen, the election of a senior engineer as president of the student body, and the rivalry between Engineers and Academs. The ratios, however, were rapidly changing in the Academs' favor: of the 617 students enrolled in fall of 1931, the Academs claimed 401, of whom 170 were men and 231 were women.

Since the college was growing both in numbers and with an expanded academic program, President Barry wanted to upgrade the faculty by bringing in more holders of doctoral degrees. Among them was Dr. C. L. Sonnichsen, who describes the situation in his introduction of this book.

In summarizing his first year in the presidency, Barry wrote for the 1932 *Flowsheet*: "As the end of the year

approaches, it is well to check the balance sheet to ascertain whether we have operated at a profit or a loss. In the final accounting there is a sheet for each one of us, and there is a sheet for the institution. I shall let you audit your own accounts, even after the Faculty has assisted you by final examinations, but I should like to audit with you the work of the College."

As debits he listed lack of funds and student failures. The latter were being addressed through an orientation program for freshmen and a system of faculty advisors. As credits he mentioned "increased, helpful, public interest, our greatest asset," the conferring of the B. A. degree for the first time, an enlarged faculty, new courses at Ysleta and lectures at William Beaumont Army Hospital, public lectures at the college, an Institute for Miners and Prospectors held during the Christmas vacation, and the college's largest enrollment in history.

In 1932 the yearbook named the first recipients of

*Isabel Abdou, seated center, won acting honors in the 1932-33 College Players' season. The group's sponsor was Mrs. Myrtle Ball, seated behind the desk at right. Others in the play cast are not identified.*





Bachelor of Arts degrees: Mary Carlisle-McGhee, Gwen Allison, Lucile Ponsford, Leola O'Neal, Thad A. Steele, Virgil Joe Neugebauer, Mrs. E. K. Craige, Alvis O. Davis, Catherine H. Flynn, Lena Garrett, Annie Grady, Mrs. Jewel Pierson, and William Powell. Fourteen graduates in mining engineering were also listed.

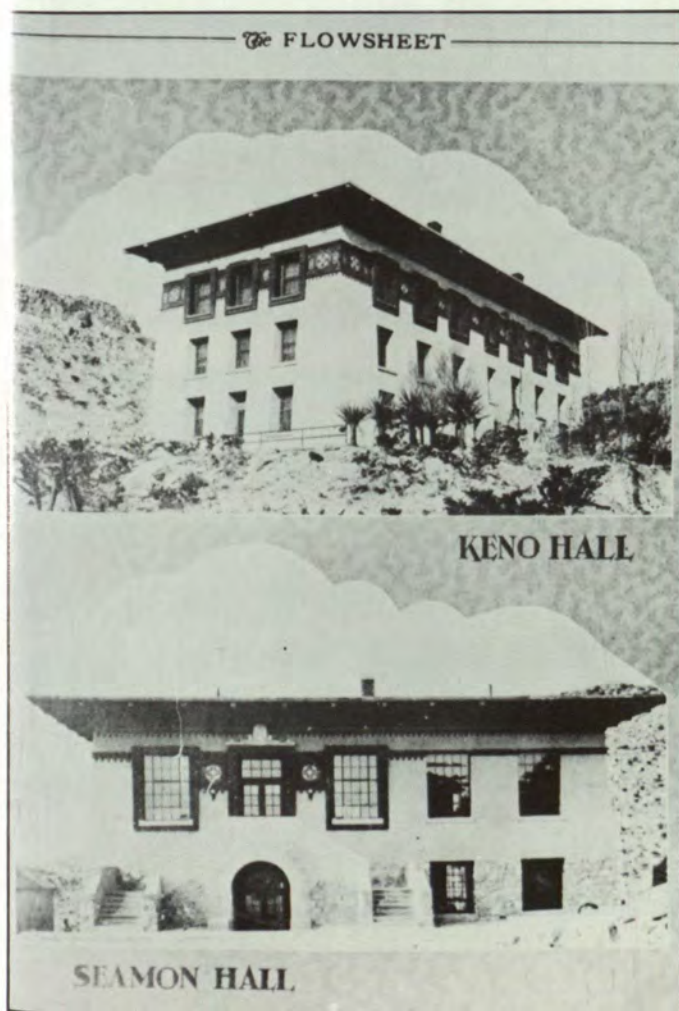
The economic squeeze dogged President Barry in 1932, when the legislature was cutting support for state institutions and looking at the possibility of closing some of them. Upon his return from a hearing in Austin in December 1932, President Barry told the *Prospector* that "The College of Mines is the only correctly situated engineering school in the state. All the others are located where there is no reason for engineering to be taught. . . . The standards of education in Texas are relatively very low. In the past, people educated outside of our state have come in and assumed many important educational positions. Do we want the relatively educated people in Texas to be only in-

tellectual peons, working under people from other states?"

By March 1933, the student newspaper indicated that the future of the college was still undetermined. A joint committee of both houses of the legislature had recommended that the College of Mines either be abandoned or be given at least \$200,000 for additional buildings for classrooms. The reasons against state support were that eighty-five percent of the students were from El Paso, so the school should be locally supported; that many were failing because of lack of library facilities, faculty, and classroom space; and that Texas' mining wealth was not in the western part of the state.

On the national scene, Franklin D. Roosevelt had become president of the United States on March 4, 1933, and the next day declared his "bank holiday." His administration began addressing the nation's economic ills with the "alphabet soup" programs of the New Deal.

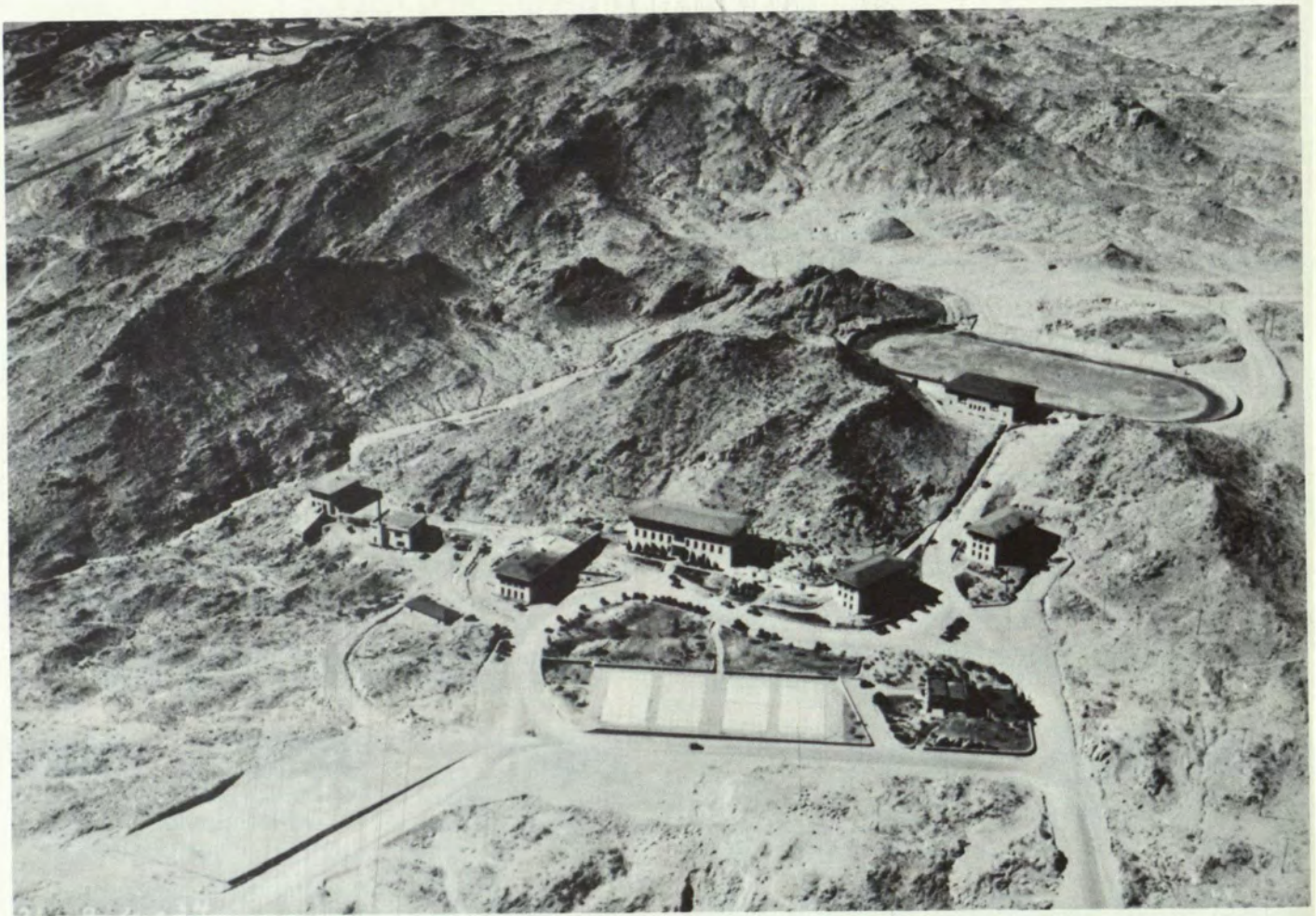
With the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment,



*This is Chemistry Building as it appeared in 1925, with cars parked on the unpaved street in front. The steps to Main are at lower right and the roof of the Power House is visible center right.*

*The original Burges Hall, built as a men's dormitory in 1917, was dubbed "Keno Hall" by the students in the late twenties and was so identified in the 1932 Flow-sheet. It is now named Graham Hall. Pictured below it was Seamon Hall.*





*This aerial of the campus, showing the new tennis courts in lower center, appeared in the 1935 issue of the Flowsheet. The smelter is at upper left.*

*Main Building in about 1933 faced an unpaved street where the few faculty members and students who had cars could park. Others walked six blocks to the nearest streetcar stop.*





prohibition was no longer the law of the land. Students reacted with a suggested toast: "The great Southwest, where men are men, women are women, and both realize the difference."

A traditional rivalry between the freshman and sophomore classes came under scrutiny in March 1933. This was the annual flag rush, when on the night of March 17 each class tried to get its flag to the top of the flagpole first. The pole was at that time located in front of Main Building, where new stone walls had just been completed. Berte R. Haigh, chairman of the faculty committee

on student activities, said the walls made a flag rush hazardous and it had been "eliminated for the sake of safety of participants." George Krutilek, sophomore president, challenged the freshmen to a baseball game instead. During the night of March 17-18, however, the freshmen flag was atop the pole. The sophomores took it down, then plotted their revenge. On the night of March 20, a band of sophomores carrying a huge flag and a bucket of axle grease was apprehended by a night watchman who succeeded in ordering them away.



*A good deal of blasting was necessary for the construction of Holliday Hall before its completion in 1933. According to Dean C. A. Puckett, as quoted in Frontier College, the gymnasium was an unusual asset, made possible through a county highway project that was to go through the college property, with the county providing materials and federal funds providing the labor. "So," said the dean, "there was the road, the retaining wall, and Holliday Hall—all built and charged to the County."*



*The tennis courts, on the site of the present Psychology Building, were a popular gathering place during the thirties and forties. The bean feeds that followed the painting of the "M" on Mount Franklin were often held here. Just beyond the tennis courts was John W. "Cap" Kidd's home. This photo was taken before the street was paved.*



*One of the first structures on the 1917 campus, originally called the Chemistry Building, in the 1940s housed geology professors' offices and, at the far end, what was then the largest lecture hall on campus. In later years it became Old Geology and in 1981 was renamed to honor Howard E. Quinn, geology professor.*



*This house, originally the home of V. E. Ware, an El Paso contractor and donor of part of the site for the present campus, was acquired by the College of Mines in 1942 to serve as the president's home. The building was vacated in 1959 and was razed in 1960 to prepare the site for the Liberal Arts Building (1961) which spans the arroyo behind this building.*





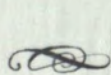


*This was the intersection of Mesa and University (then called College Avenue) in 1944. The narrow streets lacked curbs. That section of Mesa, now mainly offices and commercial buildings, was residential, with a few vacant lots.*

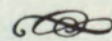


*The Power House, one of the original campus buildings of 1917, became a part of the larger Engineering Building, photographed for the 1945 Flowsheet by veteran El Paso photographer Jerry Gerlach. After later additions in the 1950s and the move of the engineering departments to the Engineering-Science Complex in 1976, this became the location of the Department of Geological Sciences.*





## Prospectus



### TEXAS COLLEGE OF MINES & ARTS

(A Branch of the University of Texas)

EL PASO, TEXAS

Following the key letters from the left around the campus are:

1 Women's gymnasium

2 Swimming pool

3 Tennis courts

4 Men's dormitories

5 Metallurgy building

6 Engineering building

7 Chemistry building

8 Old Main building

9 Holliday Hall, men's gymnasium

10 Kidd Field and Sun Bowl Stadium

11 Riding stables

12 Burgess Hall

13 Kelley Hall

14 Science building

15 Auditorium

16 Administration and Library

17 Cotton Memorial building for applied arts

18 Museum

19 Women's dormitories

20 War Memorial Park

21 Tennis courts

22 Student union building

23 Delta Delta Delta lodge

24 Chi Omega lodge

25 President's home

26 Zeta Tau Alpha lodge

*This prospectus of the Texas College of Mines "and Arts" was evidently drawn in the late forties, before the change of name to Texas Western, and indicates some construction that never materialized. The parking area west of the Union (21) is shown as tennis courts, the Women's Gym (1), lower left corner, is in place although not completed until 1951, and the row of men's dormitories (4) includes Hudspeth (1947), Worrell (1937), and Miners (1951) halls plus some added wings that were never built. At upper right (11) are the stables.*



President Barry's report in the 1933 *Flowsheet* spoke of this "period of great problems," but emphasized that there were thirteen candidates for B. S. degrees and fifty-five for B. A. degrees in June. Through community help, funds had been made available for roads and rock walls; a women's field house had been built with funds donated by the Woman's Association; and there was a new athletic field for women and an enlarged one for men. Holliday Hall was completed later in the year as a gymnasium and Burges was changed from a men's dormitory to classrooms, including a biology laboratory, and offices.

A tuition increase for nonresident students and the strains of the Depression brought an enrollment decrease in the fall of 1933, at a time when the college was trying to prove its worth to the rest of the state.

The community's interest in the college was not limited to finances. Under Coach Mack Saxon, the football

team had played winning seasons in 1929, 1930, 1931, and 1932. But the fall of 1933 brought only three wins and six losses—even though two of those losses were to Texas University and Southern Methodist. Barry, who was trying to upgrade his small college with the most limited of financial resources, became the target of a group that wanted him out, and one of the reasons aired in the press had to do with special privileges for athletes. He protested to the Board of Regents in May that local men "interested in politics, athletics, and public schools" wanted to debase the standards set by the university, adding that the college was "the only state-supported school ineligible for membership in the state association, undesirable athletic practices being an important factor." The College had applied for membership in the Border Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

John Barry officially ceased to be the president of the



*President John G. Barry in 1933 wrote a report to the Board of Regents describing current construction work and recommending some needed improvements. He suggested the Power House, left, have an "appropriate extension to the east (foreground)" and that the windows of that building and some on Seamon Hall, right, should be finished to match those of the other buildings.*



*President Barry's 1933 report to the regents pointed out the need for a hot water boiler room to be added to the small stone building, right, that served as the women's locker room for physical education classes. At left is the southwest corner of the Chemistry Building (now Quinn Hall).*



College of Mines on May 15, 1934. His annual message in the *Flowsheet* of that year said nothing of his problems with the school or the townsfolk, dwelling instead on the book's theme, "romance of mining." He said of his own profession, "There is no career open to young men which lures with more adventurous prospects. . . . It is not a life of play boy adventuring. The real romance of mining is hard work, stimulating, invigorating, and broadening to the man who likes mining and creative efforts." He returned to geology, spending many years as a consultant before his death in 1963 in Colorado.

Dean Puckett, who had been in charge of the school before Barry's appointment, became acting president for more than a year. He explored the possibility of federal aid for building dormitories and finally got approval for a grant in 1935, with construction due for completion in 1937.

One of several songs proposed for the college over the years was written by Dr. B. F. Jenness, who served on the faculty and as health officer from 1917 to 1957. Titled the "College of Mines Song," it was published in the 1935 *Flowsheet*. The opening words to the chorus were "Up! men of Mines and hit the trail; The Texas spirit shall not fail."

A new president, one whose name had been rumored for the job some months before, was appointed on June 20, 1935. Dossie Marion Wiggins was not an engineer but a professional educator who became adept at enlisting

support for the school from the regents, the Texas Legislature, and the townspeople. During his period at the helm, enrollment increased from 613 in 1935 to 2,119 in 1947. He had a gift for being able to greet all his students by name.

Dr. Wiggins continued Dean Puckett's efforts to expand the facilities. He became involved in the community debate that ultimately brought the El Paso Centennial Museum to the campus. Construction began in April 1935 on two dormitories, later named Worrell Hall and Benedict Hall, with capacity for 102 men and women students. Dr. Wiggins told the *Prospector* that they "will be a selling point for getting out-of-town students to attend Mines. . . . With a dining room in one of the dormitories, [local students] will not have to go home or downtown for lunch."

In 1937 the college benefited from a bequest of the Cotton Estate, unusual in that Frank B. Cotton had died in 1907, long before the founding of the School of Mines. He had spent six months of 1881 in El Paso on what he regarded as the "greatest adventure" of his life. At that time he had bought land in Hudspeth, Culberson, and El Paso counties. Under the terms of his will, the funds were to be administered by a panel of trustees for twenty years or until they reached a value of one million dollars, when the trust should be used to benefit "a manual or technical school or institute or other instrumentality" that would benefit women and girls in need of educational training. In

*Three men whose names live on at the university were photographed together in the 1930s. From left are Robert L. Holliday, member of the Board of Regents from 1927-1933, for whom Holliday Hall was named; Dr. Dossie M. Wiggins, president of the College of Mines from 1935-1948, for whom Wiggins Road and a room in the Union are named; and Dr. Harry Yandell Benedict, president of the University of Texas System from 1927-1937, for whom a building and several professorships were named.*





1937 a Boston lawyer contacted the Board of Regents to advise that, although Cotton had been interested in benefiting people in the Boston area, the bulk of his estate was in the El Paso area; it was reasonable to have it help a school in that vicinity. That school was the College of Mines, and the lawyer asked that the funds be used "for the establishment and maintenance of a Department of Applied Arts and Sciences for Women."

The fund had not reached a million dollars, but in later years, as a result of the 1963 Chamizal Treaty, the land in the Cotton Estate that was ceded to Mexico brought the college twice that amount. The funds were invested in order to bring in regular income for academic purposes. The Cotton Memorial Building was completed in 1947.

Mack Saxon continued as football coach, recovering from the 1935 losing season with winning records for 1936-39, then a 4-4-1 record in 1940 and 4-5-1 in 1941. He also coached basketball during several of his years at Mines, racking up the team's second winning season in 1929-30, but losing the next three years. After a year without a team, the coaching duties were given to J. B. Andrews in 1935-36, a season with no wins. Marshall Pennington then became coach, with three years of losses before he had a 14-12 season in 1939-40, followed by 17-5 in 1940-41, 11-11 in 1941-42, and 11-6 in 1942-43. He also served as business manager while coaching until 1944, moved to Texas Tech as chief fiscal officer, then returned

to UTEP in 1969 as vice president for business affairs.

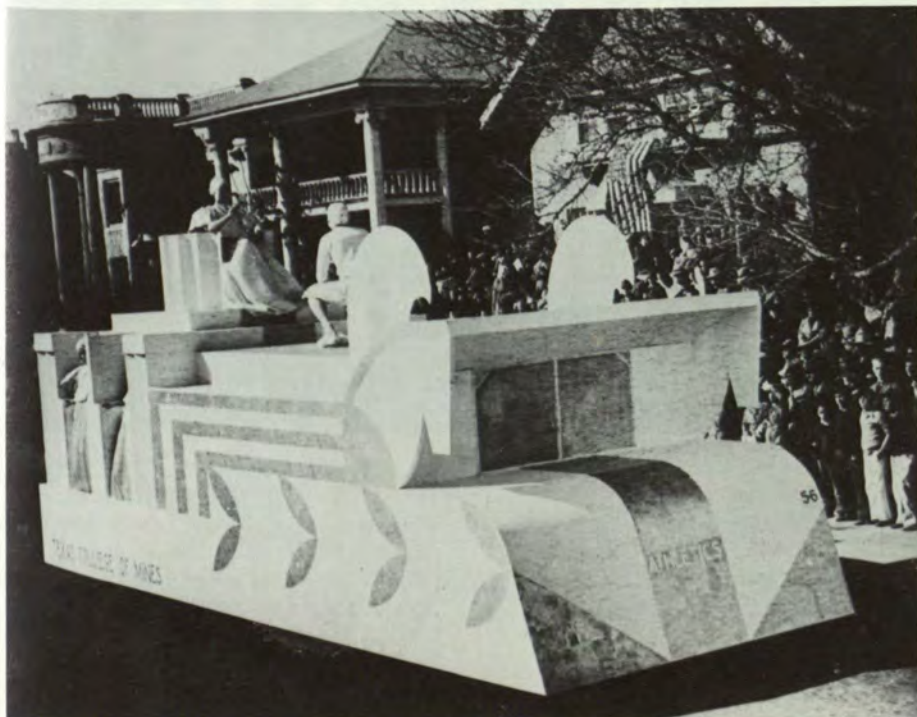
The "picturesque location" of the college was publicized in a flyer for the 1937 summer session. On the front cover was a photo of three coeds in colorful Mexican costumes. The three, Graciela Gonzales, Beatriz Maese, and Lupe Rascon, also posed for newspaper publicity pictures.

The new Administration and Library Building was completed in 1938, with plenty of space for expanding the library to serve new major fields being developed in liberal arts. Among them were a journalism major that began in 1940, when Judson F. Williams became an instructor in that new department.

In fall of 1939 enrollment for the first time passed the thousand mark, with a reading of 1,044. It continued near that level through 1941.

Another major step came in 1940 when the Board of Regents approved the degree of Master of Arts, the first graduate degree for the institution. The program began in the summer session of 1941, with majors available in biological science, chemistry, business administration, economics, geology, mathematics, physics, and Spanish.

A publicity stunt for the College Players production of *You Can't Take It With You* was recalled in early 1988 by one of the perpetrators, Tom Saxon. On December 4, 1940, he missed a job interview at Radio Station KTSM "because I couldn't get out of jail to make my appointment with the news bureau manager. But he, too, was late for



*The Texas College of Mines float in the 1937 Sun Carnival Parade won first prize in the college division. Glynn Sparks was seated on a throne on top, holding a laurel wreath for a football player who knelt before her.*





The band in 1935-36 was directed by T. E. Morris, with Robert Abadie as drum major and Margaret Kaffer the band sweetheart. Instrumentalists were John B. Howard, Kelley Ballentine, Buster Stoddard, Herbert Pixley, and Frank Hoesch, trumpets; Howard Marshall, Pete Burgard, Harvey Gardea, Alfred Bryant, Ed Price, and Wendell Pierce, clarinets; James Stacy, F. L. Dupuy, Shelby Armstrong, Don Ziler, Earl Douglas, Robert Griffing, David Tappan, and Bert Davis, trombones; Stanley Tipton and D. Payne, Jr., altos; John Valkenaar and Hart Steele, saxophones; Albert Beardsley, baritone; Bernard Wieland, Merle Hatch, John Mitchell, and Jack Watson, drums; Lemuel Breckenridge, Grady Rapier, Don Hill, and Andrew Henderson, basses. The band won second prize in the Sun Carnival parade of January 1, 1936.



The Miner basketball team, coached by Marshall Pennington, won the Border Conference championship in 1941. First row, from left, are Charles Manker, Bob Rice, Jack McCarty, and Billy Johnstone; second row, Coach Pennington, Mike Yapor, Doug Ramsey, Mike Devlin, Bill

Rike, Newton Lassiter, David Carrasco, Donald Lance, Lee Floyd, Jesse Bulos, and Manager Aaron Vickery. Lance, Lassiter, and Rike, the team captain, were named to the All-Conference squad. Courtesy UTEP Sports Media Relations.



the same reason I was in jail. He was out covering a suicide jump from the top of the Cortez Hotel. The guy was up there an hour with thousands in [San Jacinto Plaza] and cops and firemen everywhere!

"It was a fake, of course, and I had guys with ropes, etc., holding me back. Even had a dummy with balloons to throw over at the last minute, but cops and firemen broke it up. The whole idea was to publicize a college play. We had Mrs. [Myrtle] Ball's okay and police sanction. (Those were simpler times.) Only we forgot to tip off the firemen and some of my ticket hawkers in the crowd pulled an alarm to draw a bigger crowd. The fire chief insisted I be locked up. Mrs. Ball said she didn't know me, so away I went. My cop buddies and I then faked a two-hour lockup and we had a big laugh down at the station. Anyway, we packed the auditorium and I got a job at KTSM."

The United States was edging into involvement in the European war. In November 1939 President Roosevelt signed a neutrality act under which arms could be sold to belligerents under arrangements designed to assist Britain, France, and their allies. Four months later Mussolini added Italy to Hitler's Axis powers. In May 1940 Churchill began a series of appeals to President Roosevelt for help which eventually led to participation in the war. France fell to the Germans in June. Through 1941, the Lend-Lease Act and other measures brought the United States closer to the war. Finally, on December 7

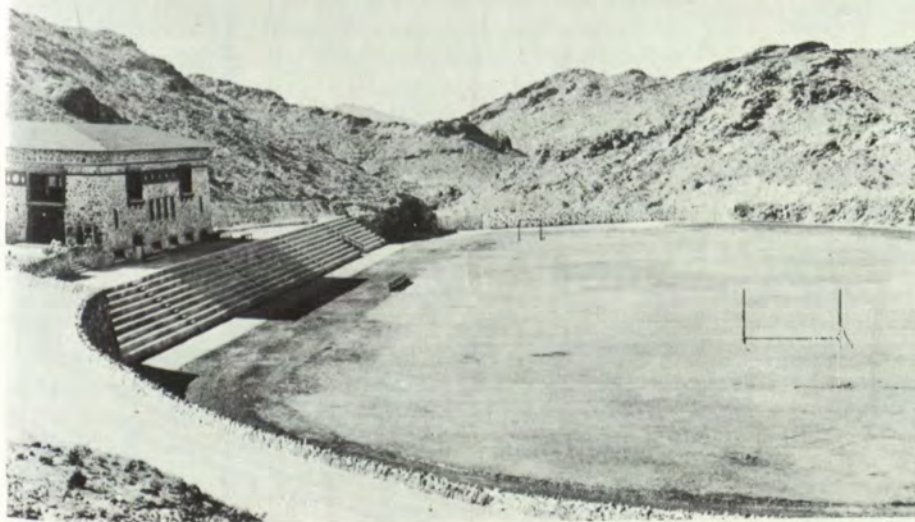
came the infamous bombing of Pearl Harbor and the next day's declaration of war.

At the college, all men aged twenty-one as of July 1 were asked to fill out War Department forms in the business office. The administration shortened the time required to complete a degree by offering more summer work.

As news of the tragedy of war increased, another tragedy occurred on the campus. The intrepid Cap Kidd, one of the earliest faculty members and a legend in his own right, died on December 29, during the year-end holidays. On the day before, he had been in his office figuring out how much work it would take to level a drill field in the area that later became Vet Village. "He died with his boots on, working for the college," observed Eugene Thomas, a professor since 1930, who had been Kidd's student.

Soon after the construction of the athletic field in 1933, it had been named in Kidd's honor. In 1961 his former students and friends dedicated another campus installation, the John W. Kidd Seismic Memorial Observatory. Thomas and Berte R. Haigh, another former student who had served on the faculty, were chairmen of the foundation for the observatory. Thomas succeeded Kidd as acting dean of engineering and later served many years as dean.

Student organizations included Pre-Med and Pre-Law



*At the time Kidd Field was being built in 1933, it was called Hendricks Field after Dr. C. M. Hendricks, a civic leader who was instrumental in starting the annual Sun Carnival in 1935. The field later was renamed for Professor John W. Kidd, a football enthusiast. The first Sun Bowl games were played in 1935 and 1936 at El Paso High School. When the bowl game moved to Kidd Field in 1937, a sign was erected identifying it as the Sun Bowl. During the early years of the community festival, the bowl game was held on New Year's Day.*



clubs, four honorary societies—Alpha Chi for scholastic achievement, Alpha Psi Omega in drama, Sigma Delta Pi in Spanish, and Sigma Gamma Epsilon in earth sciences. During the 1940-41 school year, the three sororities—Chi Omega, Delta Delta Delta, and Zeta Tau Alpha, built lodges on campus. Only the Zeta house, now the home of the Development and Alumni department, survives. There were also three local social fraternities, Alpha Phi Omega, which engineering and geology students started in 1919; Kappa Sigma Kappa; and Rho Sigma Phi, which became a chapter of Phi Kappa Tau national fraternity. A feature of the winter season in the forties was the Snow Fiesta, when students elected a Snow Queen and took a holiday in the Sacramento Mountains of New Mexico.

Engineers who took Dr. Gladys Gregory's required government course in 1940 had perfect attendance records, according to Pollard Rodgers. The reason was the "Daily Borer," a hand-drawn newspaper that Everitt Jourdan would begin work on when the class started, then would pass among his friends toward the end of the hour. He interspersed cartoons, fake advertisements, drink recipes, and other items of interest, always surprising his readers. In one copy labeled the "Resource Edition," his editorial read: "Is Trevino a cousinjack? Rumor around the west side of campus has it that, while awake, one Sal Trevino is a cousinjack. This is verified by one Primo Miller, campus philosopher. Defense witness in Trevino himself. We leave the question up to you. He is! Isn't he?" (Cousin Jack is a term for a Cornish miner. Sal Trevino, who graduated in 1941, had a distinguished career in mining engineering and was honored as Outstanding Ex-Student in 1961.) For those interested in explosives, the "Borer" carried an ad recommending "Save your teeth! Use Snappo Cap Crimpers," with an illustration of a device resembling tongs with false teeth as the pressure surfaces.

Between the fall of 1941 and 1942 enrollment dropped from 1,033 to 793, then in 1943 to 561, the lowest it had been for ten years. More and more students were leaving for military duty. The sororities organized female football games, but the public never took to them. Neither did the girls, who decided to leave the rough sports to the men.

The war had an immediate effect on intercollegiate athletics. No football seasons were scheduled for 1943, 1944, or 1945, and basketball also lacked a team in 1943-44. The *Flowsheet* also reflected the times, changing from a padded, embossed cover with color photo in 1942 to a heavy paper cover in 1943, when it was dedicated to "the hundreds of men and women of Mines now serving in the United States military and industrial forces in all parts of the world." The Forensic Club, headed by Charles Steen, curtailed its activities "because of gasoline rationing and

shortage of tires," since its competitions normally took it away from El Paso.

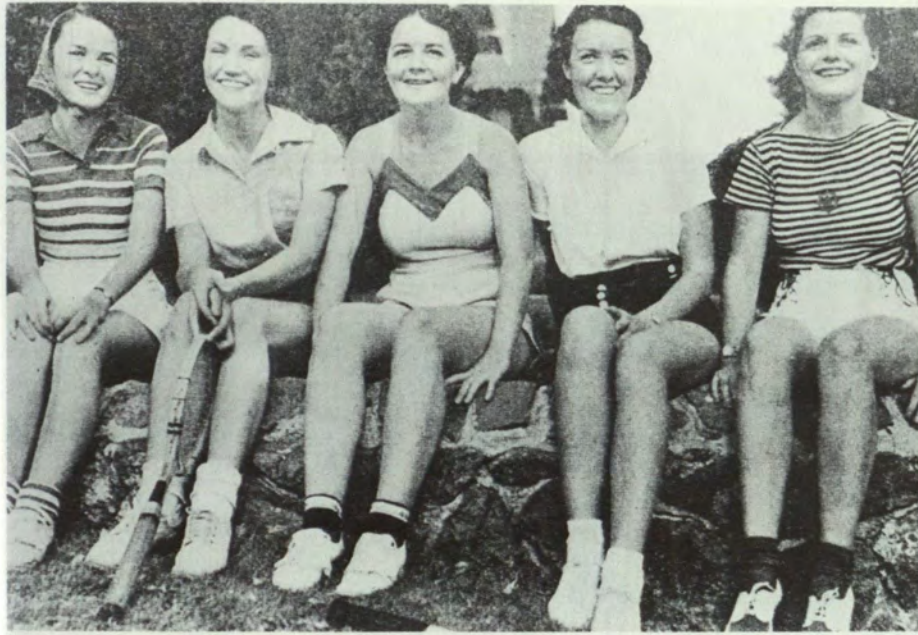
The 1944-45 academic year was summarized by B. David "Buddy" Hyde for the *Flowsheet*. A campaign was started in September to raise money for a swimming pool. The political rivalry between Engineers and Academics continued, with winners from both parties in the student body election. Chuck Finley, a navy veteran, became basketball coach for one season. Coeds were making ditty bags for the war effort. "M" Day was observed on November 4. *El Burro* magazine was reinstated after a lapse of four years. Tommie Hollenshead, as Li'l Abner, was caught by Catherine Burnett as Daisy Mae at the Sadie Hawkins Day dance. Bea Schuler was named Miss El Paso. In December the Coed Dance continued a long-standing tradition of the women reversing roles by inviting the men, calling for them, and footing the bill for the date. Hazel Cooper was named All-Mines Favorite. The Hard Luck Dance was held on March 10 and a week later St. Pat's Day initiation was observed. Also in March came the annual posture contest, a project in which Mrs. Ball took great pride as an encouragement to women students to improve appearance. By April, Fearless Fossdick (the nickname for the lone campus cop) was said to be prowling about looking for violators of campus law.

Major changes were in store for the college in 1945-46, when the influx of veterans with GI Bill benefits began. That fall 765 students enrolled; in the spring there were 1,110. Enrollment continued to escalate in the summer, and by the fall of 1946 reached 1,764. Dr. Wiggins added thirty new faculty members for a total of 105. He needed more classroom and laboratory space as well. Some classes were meeting in the Centennial Museum and the Administration/Library Building. With funds from several sources, including the Cotton endowment, the construction program resulted in two new dormitories, Bell Hall and Hudspeth Hall, and the Cotton Memorial Building, all completed in 1947. The Student Union was completed in 1948 and the long-awaited swimming pool in 1949.

With enrollment passing the 2,000 mark in 1947, never again to be lower, the pressure for more classroom space was acute. Congressman R. E. Thomason helped with arrangements for two frame barracks buildings to be brought from Camp Barkley, Texas, as temporary facilities. They were placed near the women's physical education building and continued in use until 1962.

Although new dormitory space was being provided, many of the returning veterans had wives and children. In order to house them, a group of trailers was obtained in 1946 through the Federal Public Housing Authority. The following year, additional army barracks were moved to





*The novelty of coeds at a mining school caught the fancy of Acme Newspictures, Inc., which distributed a Herald-Post photographer's picture throughout the United States in 1937. Relaxing after a tennis game were, from left, Keith Teague, Rachel Bickley, Louise Maxon, Glynn Sparks, and Virginia Lavigne. After the photo appeared in the Los Angeles Daily News, College Humor, and other publications, the girls were besieged with fan mail, including marriage proposals. Louise Maxon Rea recalls that a standing joke on campus was her letter from the owner of a California molybdenum mine who wrote that if she were not interested in marrying him, please pass along his proposal to the girl on her right. Courtesy Glynn Sparks Elliott.*



*The west entrance to the original part of the Student Union Building, popularly called the SUB, in 1948 led to a lounge area with the ballroom beyond. The snack*

*bar and recreation facilities were in the basement, with offices on the first and second floors.*



---

be converted into duplexes for the families. The area south of the dormitories became known as Wiggins Acres or Vet Village, and the street leading to the area is still Wiggins Road.

The Gold Diggers (spelled as one word in recent years) had new uniforms, western-style skirt and vest, white blouse, short white boots, and Western hat. They also had their own song:

*Here come all those Gold Digger girls,  
Oh, how in the world do you know?  
You can tell them by their cheery smile  
Most anywhere they go, most anywhere they go.*

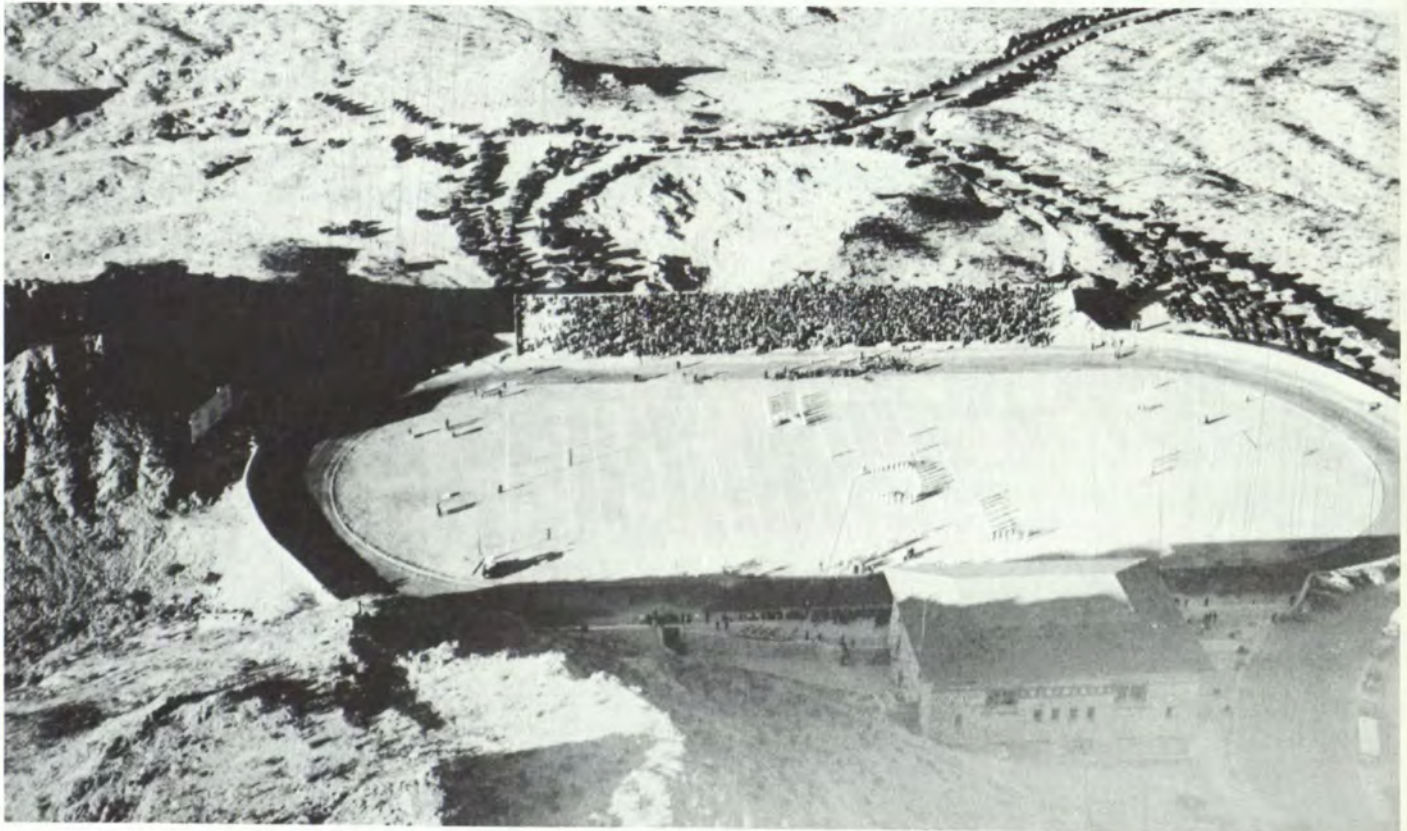
Kathleen Craigo was the faculty sponsor.

Dr. Wiggins' success in meeting the many challenges of the College of Mines brought him an offer to become

president of Texas Tech at Lubbock. He resigned, effective August 31, 1948, and Engineering Dean Eugene Thomas served as ad interim president through December.

This became an uncomfortable period for Dean Thomas and others of the engineering/mining/geology background. Community pressure was building in favor of a name change. The College of Mines and Metallurgy, ran the argument, was no longer a mining school. It was largely a liberal arts school and the proportion of engineers grew smaller every year. This was especially brought out by the pouring in of veterans in the post-war years (when men outnumbered women about three-to-one).

Engineers and those sympathetic to their cause marched in hard hats, pleading to keep the name of their college, but theirs was a lost cause.



*The band spelled out the letters "TCM" on Kidd Field for a game that filled the stands, perhaps one of the Sun Bowl games*

*played by the Miners in the thirties and forties. In the foreground in shadow is Holliday Hall.*



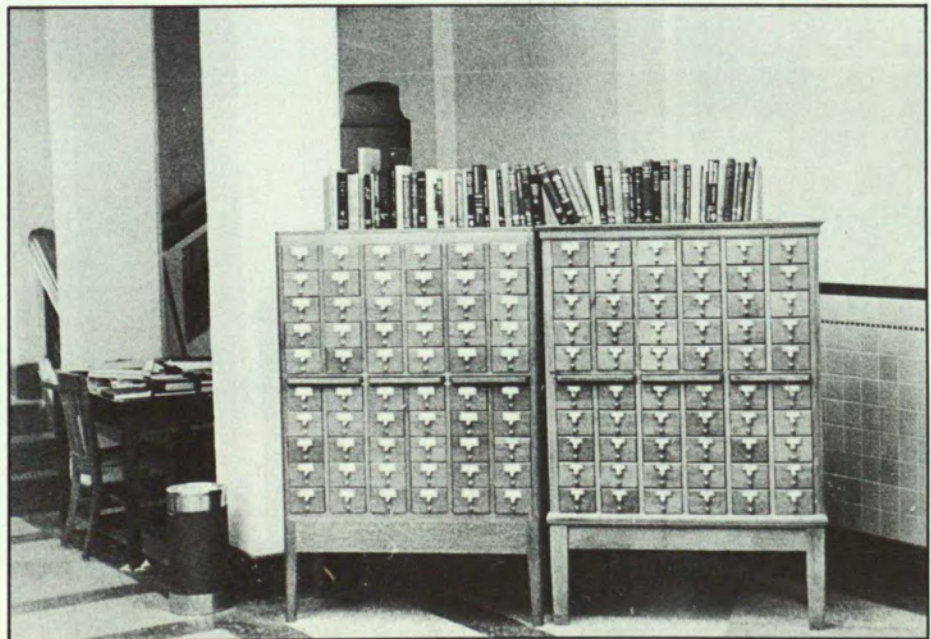


*Baxter Polk, left, became librarian in 1936 when the library occupied the third floor of Kelly (now Vowell) Hall, reached by this outside stairway. Book stacks were at the north end of the building and a reading room was at the south end. Some of the 12,000 volumes were stored in the basement under a trap door. When Polk started, he had four student assistants, taught four classes, and purchased and catalogued all new books.*

*When the library occupied the second floor of the Library and Administration Building, this small card catalog reflected the number of volumes available to researchers in the 1940s.*



*The burro, pick, and shovel seal of the College of Mines was inlaid in the floor at the entrance to the library in the forties.*







*The focal point of the Library and Administration Building of the 1940s was, for researchers, this main library room on the second floor. Around the walls were the names of important scholars. The checkout desk was through the arch at the right and the book stacks were behind the desk.*





*William S. Strain, who joined the faculty in 1937, had a reputation for skipping up rocky hills like a mountain goat with his geology field trip classes struggling far behind. He was curator of the Centennial Museum during its early years and chaired the Department of Geological Sciences before his retirement in 1974*

*when he was named professor emeritus. The Hall of Paleontology and Conchology in the museum was dedicated to him in 1985 and in 1987 the Quinn Hall facility once known as Chemistry Lecture was renamed the William S. Strain Memorial Lecture Hall.*

## Centennial Museum

A concerned community had raised the money to bring the School of Mines to El Paso and local support enabled the school to relocate after a fire. In the same vein, El Pasoans rose to the challenge when a new museum was proposed—and saw to it that the building was erected on the campus of the College of Mines.

In 1935 Texas was looking toward the next year's celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of independence from Mexico. Despite a depressed economy, the state set aside funds to erect appropriate monuments. El Paso's grant was fifty thousand dollars.

The city's population had grown from 77,000 in 1920 to 102,000 in 1930. Despite the rapid pace of growth, however, one longtime goal of the people had not yet been realized: the creation of a municipal museum. Committees had been looking into the idea for several years. They thought of buying the Magoffin Home (now a State Historic Site) or adding a wing to the Public Library.

Meanwhile, small collections of artifacts were on display in various locations. The Pioneers Association had one in the basement of the County Courthouse, and an archeological collection was kept in the library which exhibited it now and then. Professor Howard E. Quinn since 1931 had operated a small museum in the basement of the college's Main Building.

During the twenties and early thirties, various groups, among them the El Paso Museum Association, explored possible locations for a museum. Then, at the annual meeting of the Woman's Auxiliary of the College of Mines on March 2, 1935, a petition was circulated advocating a museum on the campus. This group joined with the Pioneers Association, the International Museum Association, and the college faculty to request a Public Works Administration loan of \$150,000 for that purpose. A simultaneous proposal was made for Congress to donate the old Federal Courthouse at Oregon and Mills streets for museum use, the organizations feeling that if one request failed, the other might succeed.





Not everyone favored the college location, since the campus was at that time outside the city limits and was not considered a tourist attraction. When the fifty thousand dollars in Centennial funds was made available to El Paso, its use for a museum was not disputed, but the location was. Two existing committees interested in the Centennial merged in October 1935 to form the El Paso Centennial Committee, chaired by Maurice Schwartz. At the first meeting, *Herald-Post* editor Wallace Perry advocated that the funds be used to erect a building commemorating early explorers and conquistadors, to be turned over to the College of Mines as a museum for both community and college.

During the next two months, El Pasoans discussed the pros and cons of locating the museum at the college or somewhere else—the Magoffin Home, San Jacinto Plaza, Washington Park. A significant point in the college's favor was the question of maintenance. Neither the city nor the county government would make a commitment to keep up a museum's property. But Dr. D. M. Wiggins, president of the College of Mines, indicated that the University of Texas Board of Regents would consider the idea.

*This bas-relief by El Paso artist Tom Lea was placed above the oak doors of the main entrance to the museum. It depicts Cabeza de Vaca's arrival in the pass of the north area in 1536. Lea, who was not a sculptor, made a full-size design for the stone panel*

*and a diagram of the depth and character of the incisions. Architect Percy McGhee sent them to a limestone quarry near Austin where a skilled stonecutter followed the directions to Lea's satisfaction.*







*Displaying some of the El Paso Centennial Museum's historic treasures during the 1987 celebration of its golden anniversary are (from left) James M. Day, director; Dora Visconti, administrative assistant; and Tom O'Laughlin, curator.*



*A special attraction at the El Paso Centennial Museum is Old Engine No. 1, displayed in a glass-enclosed shelter that was provided by community donors in 1968. The engine was built in 1857 in Jersey City, New Jersey, for the Milwaukee & Prairie du Chien Railway Co., which operated it until 1889 when it was purchased by the Arizona & Southeastern Railroad. The engine was used for ore trains from the Phelps Dodge Copper Queen Mine at Bisbee. The company changed to El Paso & Southwestern, the name abbreviated on the sides of the engine, in 1901, and the engine continued to serve until 1909 when it was placed in a park beside the Southern Pacific Building in downtown El Paso. In 1938 it was put back in service for the M-G-M film "Let Freedom Ring." In 1960 Old No. 1 was presented to the college by Southern Pacific.*



A subcommittee on locating the museum met with city officials and the regents. Its report, presented to the Chamber of Commerce Centennial Committee on December 4, resulted in a vote favoring the college location. Another subcommittee was assigned to ask the Board of Regents to accept under a deed of trust a 10.54-acre tract of city land adjacent to the college and a fifty thousand dollar Memorial Arts Building, on condition that it be maintained as a museum. The regents, meeting in Austin on December 6, 1935, accepted the land and the building and agreed to provide a curator and to pay other maintenance costs.

Not everyone in the community was pleased with that idea, however. Some controversy arose within the Chamber of Commerce which divorced its Centennial Committee from the museum project. The responsibility for locating the site thus fell on the El Paso County Advisory Committee of the Texas Centennial, chaired by Mrs. A. F. (Harriet) Quisenberry. Appointees to that group included some of the town's most prominent citizens. Input was invited—in writing—from others. Mrs. Quisenberry was advised beforehand by Mayor R. E. Sherman that the city government could not promise any operational help for the museum beyond the current administration. The seven-hour meeting brought a six-to-five ballot decision to locate at the college.

Once the Centennial Division of the Board of Control, the agency in charge of funding for approved state projects, was notified of the decision, construction plans were under way. Shortly before Christmas, Percy McGhee, El Paso architect, was chosen to design the building, with Dr. Wiggins and Perry, the newspaper editor, as an advisory committee. The three of them chose a site at the end of College Avenue and south of the location for the administration and library building that would be completed in 1938.



McGhee was faithful to the Bhutanese design tradition in his work for this building and the nine others he executed for the college in later years. Instead of having a rectangular conformation, it was in a U-shape around a terrace. The fence enclosure at the front features two stone urns fashioned after Bhutanese prayer wheels, a detail McGhee also used on the first wing of the Union Building. Although he had planned for the native stone walls to be stuccoed like those of the other campus buildings, budget problems eliminated the stucco. Some later buildings utilized the exposed stone feature first used in the museum.

R. E. McKee of El Paso was low bidder on the construction, which began on June 4 and was completed October 22, 1936.

Mrs. Quisenberry's committee met in June to resolve the naming of the building and settled on El Paso Centennial Museum. The opening ceremonies and dedication, also planned by this committee, were held over the weekend of April 23-25, 1937. The plaque commemorating that event is displayed in the museum lobby.

Geology Professor Howard Quinn, who had assembled the exhibits for the opening, continued as curator through most of 1937. In August another geologist, William S. Strain, became the curator, also teaching part time, and remained in that position for ten years.

Until the postwar years of new construction, classes in art, music, speech, and drama met in the museum.



*Gordon Gunn and Ada Mae Hadlock were cheerleaders in 1932-33. Under their photo in the 1933 Flowsheet was an editorial complaint that students did not*

*cheer loudly enough at sports events because they "do not all sit together, but spread out, . . . Let's have a section where we will all go, be together, and yell."*



*The Varsitonians were the campus dance orchestra of the forties and fifties. As pictured in the 1942 Flowsheet, members were: first row, from left, Jack Coleman, Charles Antene, Lester Webel, Joe Reisman; second row, Stanley Wright, Frank*

*Keton, Gene Proctor, Pat Patterson, Edd Paul, Betty Jeanne West, Joe Spurrier, and Knight Baker. They featured skits, stunts, and impromptu solo work in their performances. Dances were held at Holliday Hall or in downtown hotels.*





*The student gathering place of the thirties and forties was the Co-op on the first floor of Main. Here students purchased books, souvenirs, soft drinks, cigars, and candy.*

*The stables, located approximately where the Special Events Center now is, offered horseback riding for recreation and physical education credit in the forties. Its snack bar was the nearest spot for refreshments except for the Co-op in the basement of Main Building.*





The campus radio station, KVOF, received those call letters in 1947, after first being known as WTCM. The new letters stood for "Voice of Freedom." The station's tower was on the hill behind Kelly Hall, where the studios were on the top floor.

In 1967 the former KVOF-FM adopted the call letters KTEP and operated on 38,000 watts. The transmitter was moved that year to the KROD tower on Mount Franklin. The station became a charter member of National Public Radio in 1971. The first stereo broadcasts were in 1976. The following year, an annual survey ranked KTEP as nineteenth among more than two hundred NPR stations. The station moved to Cotton Memorial Building in 1979 and satellite facilities became available. The power was increased to 100,000 watts in 1980, the year that the station began celebrating thirty years of FM broadcasting in El Paso. Stereo simulcasts were initiated that fall in cooperation with KCOS-TV.



Urbici Soler, a member of the art faculty from 1946 to 1953, executed the statue of Christ on the Sierra de Cristo Rey where the states of Texas, New Mexico, and Chihuahua meet. The twenty-nine-foot statue (one foot taller than the Christ of the Andes) was proposed by the Reverend Lourdes Costa, shown at right here posing while Soler works on a bust of him. Sculptures by Soler may be found in the UTEP and El Paso Public libraries.





*A group of faculty members who were ex-Miners got together for this photo for the 1948 Flowsheet. First row, from left, are Eugene Thomas, dean of engineering; Frances Newman, music department; Eleanor Duke, biology; and L. A. "Speedy"*

*Nelson, one of the first students at the School of Mines and a faculty member since 1920. Standing are Harve Nelson, engineering; Robert Schumaker, physics, and W. E. "Pete" Snelson, journalism.*





*The Golden Jubilee Convocation featured a faculty procession across the campus to Magoffin Auditorium where members of the Board of Regents, officials of the University of Texas System, community lead-*

*ers, military commanders, and dignitaries from universities of the United States and Mexico were special guests. The program was held May 22, 1963.*

